

## **VA HIV/AIDS PROGRAMS FACT SHEET**

### **Clinical Care**

VA is the largest single provider of comprehensive HIV/AIDS care in the country.

- The VA National HIV/Hepatitis C Program Office directs policy on treatment and access to care.
- The VA medical system includes 157 hospitals, 887 outpatient clinics, and 135 nursing care units.
- There are HIV/AIDS Coordinators at every VA hospital.
- VA's standard of care for HIV drug treatment, per the VA Under Secretary for Health, is "Guidelines for the Use of Antiretroviral Agents in HIV-Infected Adults and Adolescents" (Department of Health and Human Services).
- VA has a national electronic medical record system.
- There were about 20,000 unique HIV patients in VA care in FY 2004.

### **VA Immunology Case Registry (ICR)**

This Registry contains 50,000 unique patient records dating to 1992. It:

- Keeps data on all HIV/AIDS veterans who receive care at any VA facility.
- Accesses all VA databases on utilization and medical care; number and type of visit, admissions, diagnoses, pharmaceuticals (VA has a national formulary), lab results, radiology, pathology, death.

Recent improvements in ICR enable:

- Local VA clinicians to track usage of care and better examine safety, quality, and outcomes
- VA staff at a national level to review clinical information from entire system for safety and quality of care

### **Education/Communication**

VA is the largest employer and trainer of physicians and nurses in the US.

- It has a proactive national program of clinician education on HIV/AIDS issues: prevention, pre- and post-test counseling, clinical updates, HIV/AIDS Information Center, Center for Quality Management in Public Health tracks patient safety and quality via ICR, provides collaborative support for quality improvement.
- There are frequent national conferences, video and audio conferences, and monthly "hot line" calls.
- ICR data is published via national reports and biannual newsletter, VA HIV Report

### **Prevention**

- VA Public Health National Prevention Program directs active prevention initiatives on increasing HIV testing.
- Prevention activities are associated with relevant programs: drug treatment, homeless programs, readjustment counseling (vet center) programs, and domiciliary facilities.
- Monthly national prevention "hotline" calls; VA HIV Prevention Handbook published in FY 02, risk assessment brochure distributed in FY03/04.

### **Research**

- VA Center for HIV Research Resources in Palo Alto is a clearinghouse for projects and information.
- VA investigators are involved in over 300 HIV-AIDS-related research projects
- Key studies being done in VA patient populations include
  - OPTIMA (VA, Canada, UK) – management strategy for veterans failing therapy
  - Veterans Aging Cohort Study (VACS) - increasing understanding of HIV in aging patients.

### **VA HIV/AIDS Programs**

Public Health Strategic Health Care Group (13B)  
Veterans Health Administration/Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20420 (202) 273-8567, fax (202) 273-6243  
<http://www.hiv.va.gov> - <http://vawww.hiv.va.gov>

*December 2005*